

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-14 (Canceled)

15. (New) A viscous fluid coupling comprising:

a housing rotatably supported on a drive shaft which is rotated by an internal combustion engine;

an operation plate set in the housing and dividing a space defined within the housing into a fluid reservoir and an operation chamber, the operation plate comprising a communication hole communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber;

a rotor disposed in the operation chamber and fixed to the drive shaft;

a valve mechanism opening and closing the communication hole by means of a coiled bimetal, which extends and compresses according to ambient temperature around the housing, to control a flow rate of fluid flowing from the reservoir to the operation chamber;

a plurality of first circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the housing, the first circumferential projections each having the same axial dimension, taken in a direction parallel to an axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of second circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, the second circumferential projections having the same axial dimension, taken in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of third circumferential projections concentrically formed on the plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, the third circumferential projections being disposed at a radially outer side of the second circumferential projections, the third circumferential projections each having the same axial dimension, taken in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor, the axial dimension of the third circumferential projections being smaller than the axial dimension of the second circumferential projections; and

a fluid return passage disposed at an outer peripheral side of the housing, the fluid return passage communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber.

16. (New) A viscous fluid coupling comprising:

a housing rotatably supported on a drive shaft which is rotated by an internal combustion engine;

an operation plate set in the housing and dividing a space defined within the housing into a reservoir and an operation chamber, the operation plate comprising a communication hole communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber;

a rotor disposed in the operation chamber and fixed to the drive shaft;

a valve mechanism opening and closing the communication hole by means of a coiled bimetal, which extends and compresses according to ambient temperature around the housing, to control a flow rate of fluid flowing from the reservoir to the operation chamber;

a plurality of first circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the housing, the first circumferential projections each having the same axial dimension, taken in a direction parallel to an axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of second circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, the second circumferential projections having the same axial dimension, taken in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of third circumferential projections concentrically formed on the plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, three of the third circumferential projections being disposed at a radially outer side of the second circumferential projections, an axial dimension of the third circumferential projections being smaller than the axial dimension of the second circumferential projections; and

a fluid return passage disposed at an outer peripheral side of the housing, the fluid return passage communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber.

17. (New) A viscous fluid coupling comprising:

a housing rotatably supported on a drive shaft which is rotated by an internal combustion engine;

an operation plate set in the housing and dividing a space defined within the housing into a reservoir and an operation chamber, the operation plate comprising a communication hole communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber;

a rotor disposed in the operation chamber and fixed to the drive shaft;

a valve mechanism opening and closing the communication hole by means of a coiled bimetal, which extends and compresses according to ambient temperature around the housing, to control a flow rate of fluid flowing from the reservoir to the operation chamber;

a plurality of first circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the housing, the first circumferential projections each having the same axial dimension, taken in a direction parallel to an axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of second circumferential projections concentrically formed on a plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, the second circumferential projections having the same axial dimension, taken in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor;

a plurality of third circumferential projections concentrically formed on the plane of the rotor and interleaved with the first circumferential projections, the third circumferential projections being disposed at a radially outer side of the second circumferential projections, an axial dimension of the third circumferential projection ranges from two-third to a half of an overlapped amount of the first circumferential projections and the second circumferential projections; and

a fluid return passage disposed at an outer peripheral side of the housing, the fluid return passage communicating the reservoir and the operation chamber.